

News Release

2011 Torch & Shield Recipients Recognized at Annual Donor Recognition Event on Wednesday, October 26, 2011, at the U of M Crookston

By Itolles on Monday, October 3, 2011

The highest honor given by the University of Minnesota Crookston, the Torch & Shield Award, will celebrate the leadership of four individuals who have aided in the development of the Crookston campus, the Northwest Research and Outreach Center (NWROC) and Extension.

Honorees for 2011 include: Robert Nelson, registrar and institutional research director at the U of M Crookston; Carol Windels, professor of plant pathology at the NWROC; Li Shuming, president of Zhejiang Economic & Trade Polytechnic in Zhejiang, China; and Kathleen O'Brien, vice president of University Services at the U of M, Twin Cities. The evening is also designed to honor donors and will highlight the achievements of several students as part of the program.



Robert Nelson, Ph.D., came to the University of Minnesota Crookston in 1987 as the vice chancellor for student affairs and director of financial aid. In 1996, he became registrar along with his duties as vice chancellor, a combined role he held until 2005, when he added the director of institutional research to his role as registrar.

Over the years, Nelson has held significant roles in the transition of the campus to a baccalaureate institution from a two-year technical college and the conversion from quarters to semesters. He led efforts on the Crookston campus for web-based student self-registration, the University (U) Card, Academic Progress Audit System (APAS) for academic advising, the campus institutional research program, the student center design and construction project, and the "one-stop" student service center among others.

He has been very active in the community serving from 2003 to 2008 on the RiverView Health board of directors, a member of Crookston Rotary Club and serving as president in 1997-98, president of the Crookston Chamber of Commerce in 1992, and a member of the Crookston 2000 Community Design Team. Nelson was awarded the Linda Schrempp Alberg Outstanding Contribution to Minnesota Higher Education award by the Minnesota College Personnel Association in 1995 and was named the Northwest Minnesota Counselors Association Administrator of the Year for 1990-91.

Kathleen O'Brien has served as vice president for University Services since October 2002. Under her leadership, University Services has been transformed into a campus leader in accountability, efficiency and outstanding service. University Services, with a \$394 million annual operating budget and more than 3,000 employees includes Facilities Management, Capital Planning and Project Management, Auxiliary Services (Bookstores, Dining Services, Housing and Residential Life, Parking and Transportation, Printing Services, and University Stores), Public Safety (University Police Department, Central Security , and Emergency Management), and Environmental Health and Safety, and Building Codes.



Vice President O'Brien has system-wide leadership responsibilities on issues related to emergency preparedness, facilities, sustainability, campus master planning and environmental health and safety. Vice President O'Brien directs the University's efforts on the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit line which will travel though the heart of campus on Washington Avenue. From 2003 to 2009, she and Athletics Director Joel Maturi led the construction of TCF Bank Stadium, the first Big Ten football stadium built in more than a generation.



Li Shuming has served as president of Zhejiang Economic and Trade Polytechnic (ZJETP) since 2000. ZJETP in Hangzhou, China, is a partner university with University of Minnesota, Crookston. For the past ten years, President Li has paid special attention to building ZJETP's relationships with institutions overseas. He successfully strengthened ties with international education partners when he signed a cooperative agreement with the University of Minnesota, Crookston. This agreement established a ZJETP-UMC joint English as Second Language (ESL) program as well as two joint programs in agriculture business and computer software technology and allows ZJETP students to transfer to the U of M, Crookston to earn their bachelor's degrees.

President Li has been awarded Outstanding President by the National Marketing and Supply Group. Under his leadership, ZJETP has grown to offer four international cooperation programs, two language centers, and is now in collaboration with more than 10 institutions overseas.

Carol Windels, Ph.D., is a world renowned expert in sugar beet root diseases and has made major contributions to the understanding of sugar beet root diseases and their control or management in the sugar beet industry of Minnesota and North Dakota. Previous to that, she made significant contributions to the understanding of Fusarium Head Blight (scab disease in small grains) and the organism that causes it.



Her professional career started with the University of Minnesota as a junior scientist rising through the rank of Scientist. In 1984, she came to Crookston and the Northwest Experiment Station as an assistant professor. In 1998, she was promoted to full professor and is a valued member of the faculty at the Northwest Research and Outreach Center. She is also an adjunct professor at North Dakota State University's Department of Plant Pathology.

Windels has been teacher and mentor to several graduate students as well as numerous under graduate students who have worked in her lab and on her projects these many years. She is a member of several professional societies and has served as an officer in various capacities, including president, of the American Phytopathological Society. She has earned several awards and honors including the Sugarbeet Distinguished Service Award by the Sugarbeet Industry of Minnesota and North Dakota, the Meritorious Service Award by the American Society of Sugar Beet Technologists, and is a Fellow in both the American Phytopathological Society and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

The Torch & Shield Award honors contributions of significance to higher education, the Crookston campus, and the region; recognizes champions of the U of M Crookston, NWROC and Extension for their impact on the region through teaching, research, and outreach; and distinguishes both high profile individuals and those who have been "quiet" contributors to the success of the Crookston campus.

Today the University of Minnesota Crookston delivers 29 bachelor's degree programs, 18 minors, and more than 40 concentrations, including 10 online degrees, in the areas of agriculture and natural resources; business; liberal arts and education; and math, science and technology. With an enrollment of more than 1,500 undergraduates from more than 25 countries and 40 states, the Crookston campus offers a supportive, close-knit atmosphere that leads to a prestigious University of Minnesota degree. "Small Campus. Big Degree." To learn more, visit www.umcrookston.edu.

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- NWROC
- Awards and Recognition
- Extension

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- Academic Calendar
- Library
- Directories
- Maps, Directions & Parking
- Quick Facts
- Bookstore

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- Home

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